



Dr. Sesh has a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Rutgers University, USA. He has practiced Western astrology and Jyotish for over 15 years. He has developed his own astrology software, Lifespan, which is available at [drsesh.com /lifespan](http://drsesh.com/lifespan). He has also founded a relationship compatibility site, matescore.com that gives compatibility scores using innovative astrology-based algorithms. For more information about Dr. Sesh and his astrological services, visit drsesh.com. He can be reached by email at sesh@drsesh.com

Remaking Your Life: The Outer Planets in Motion

By
Sesh Venugopal, USA.

(All planetary positions in this article are tropical.)

The outer planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, play a dramatic role in the life when configured strongly in the natal horoscope. The aspects of these planets, especially the conjunctions, squares, and oppositions, particularly to the Sun, Moon, and the angles signify a strong push toward an exceptional way of being. Whether or not we have the outer planets emphatically delineated in our natal chart, we are still exposed to their transformational influence when they hit our natal planets and points by transits and solar arc directions.

Planets are really always in transit as they whirl around in their orbits. Your birth chart is nothing but a snapshot of all the transiting planets captured at your time of birth, from your place of birth. A planet sometimes appears to be stationary or retrograde—going backward—relative to the earth, but in the absolute sense it is always moving forward.

To understand solar arc directions, we first need to understand secondary progressions. A secondary progression is a symbolic movement applied to a planet, in contrast to the real movement or transit.

Say a person was born at noon on June 1, 1980. Exactly 24 hours later, at noon on June 2, 1980, all the planets would have transited to new positions according to how much they advanced (or retrograded) in that time. These transit positions are taken to be equal to the secondary progressed (SP) positions of the planets for June 1, 1981, exactly a year after birth. Thus, SP symbolically equates a day's worth of motion of each planet to a year in the life, and is used to forecast the life direction. The SP position of the Moon is the most useful of the lot since it moves the most during a day. Also note that a few years into life, some of the planets may actually show SP positions that are behind the natal positions because these planets retrograde in the equivalent days of transit.

One of the drawbacks of using SP is that the outer planets do not really count for much since they move so slowly. So, for instance, thirty years in the life may not amount to more than a degree of SP movement of the outer planets. This led astrologers to think of other symbolic movements that might reinstate the importance of the outer planets and work well in practice. SP gave the idea of a "day equal to a year." The Sun, which had always been given pride of place in Western astrology, moves about a degree a day. Two and two made four, and gave rise to this idea: Why not use the motion of the Sun as a symbol for the unfolding of life, and thus transfer its motion to all the other planets?

So, start with the longitudinal arc covered by the Sun in its motion in a single day. This is the solar arc, or SA, for short. Then, advance the Sun, and all the other planets (and the nodes, and the angles) by this solar arc. The new positions are the solar arc, or SA, directed positions that would equate to one year in the life. Since all the bodies in the horoscope move at the same rate, they are accorded equal importance. Moreover, none of the bodies ever moves backward since the Sun is never retrograde. The outer planets, in particular, now become remarkably prescient indicators of life transformations.

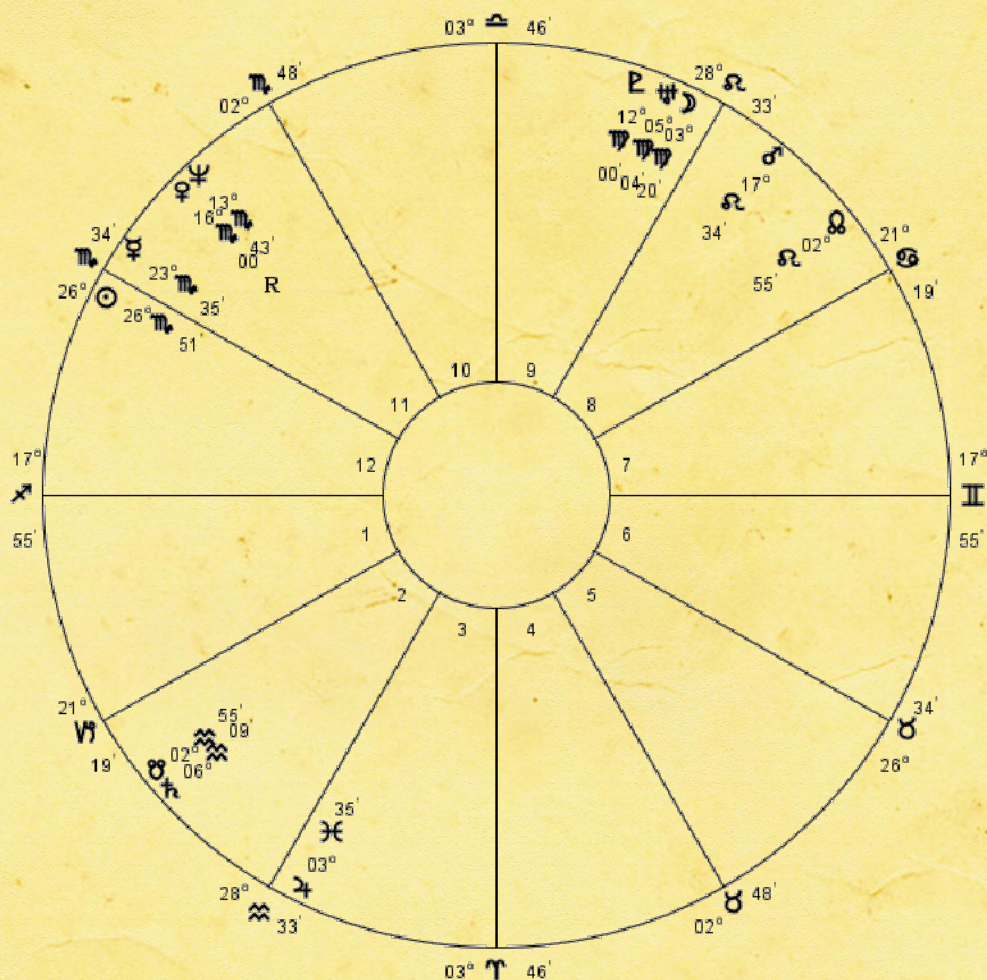
So, start with the longitudinal arc covered by the Sun in its motion in a single day. This is the solar arc, or SA, for short. Then, advance the Sun, and all the other planets (and the nodes, and the angles) by this solar arc. The new positions are the solar arc, or SA, directed positions that would equate to one year in the life.

Following is the natal chart of the actress Jodie Foster.

See that Uranus is at 05 Vir 04, Neptune is at 13 Sco 43, and Pluto is at 12 Vir 00. Now eyeball the arc distance between each of these planets and the angle that is nearest to it. For Uranus and Pluto the nearest angle is the MC at 03 Lib 46. The arc distance between Uranus and the MC is 28 degrees and 42 minutes, and between Pluto and the MC is 21 degrees and 46 minutes. For Neptune the nearest angle is the ascendant at 17 Sag 55, and the separating arc distance is 34 degrees and 12 minutes.

For purpose of estimation, assume that the arc distance covered by the Sun in a day of motion is exactly one degree. Then, in the SA directed technique, all planets would be advanced by one degree for one year of life. In this example, therefore, SA directed Uranus (written simply as SA Uranus) would come to conjunct the MC in 28 and 42/60 years, or approximately 28 years and 8 months, SA Pluto would conjunct the MC in approximately 21

years and 9 months, and SA Neptune would conjunct the MC in about 34 years and 2 months.

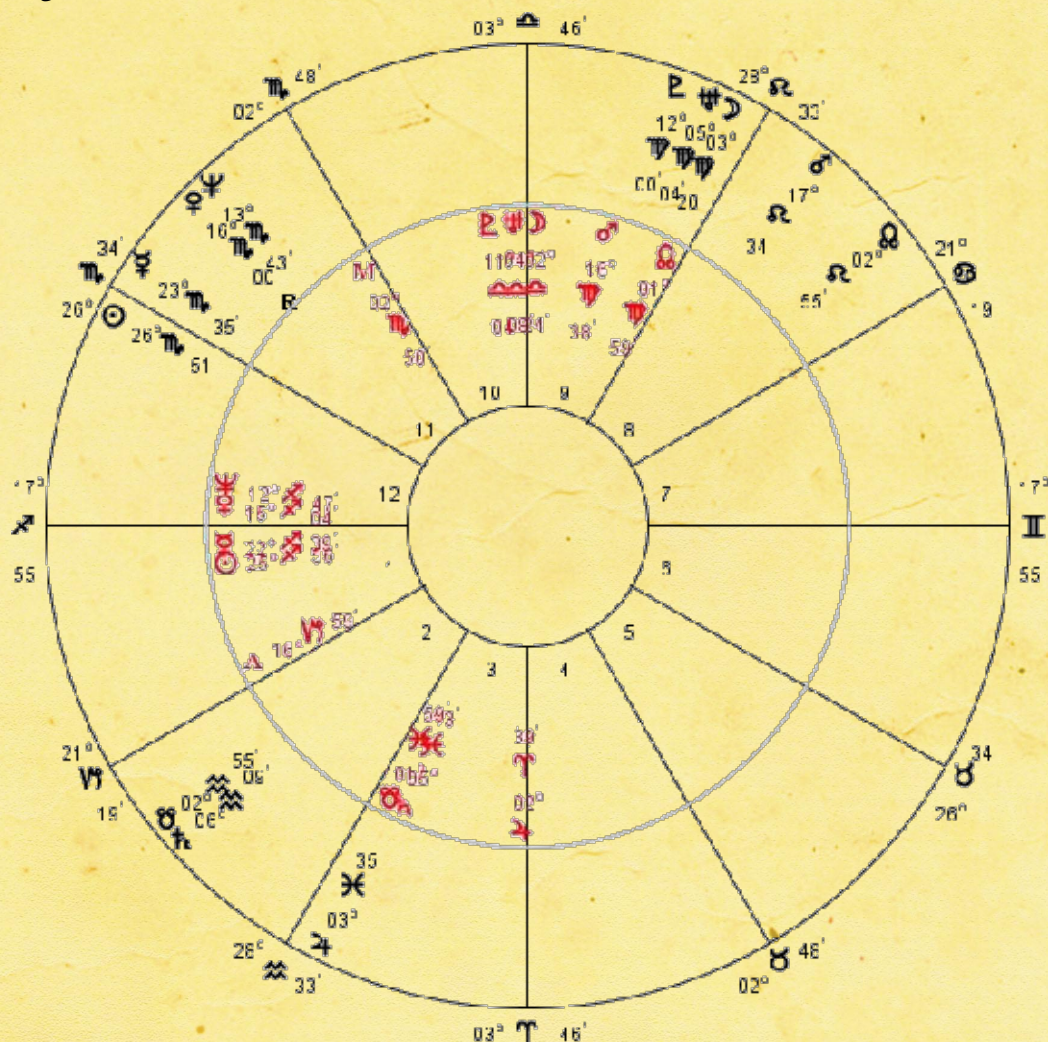


Focus on the SA Uranus to delve a little deeper. Foster was born on November 19, 1962. When she is about 28 years and 8 months of age, SA Uranus would conjunct the natal MC, which would put the date of this event at about July 19, 1991. Let's draw the SA directed chart for this date, and overlay it on top of the natal chart:

The outer wheel is the natal chart, and the inner wheel in red is the SA directed positions of the planets, the nodes, and the angles (A for ascendant and M for MC). See the SA Uranus at 04 Lib 08. It has *passed* the MC, a full 22 minutes of arc beyond. Our estimate was off because the Sun does not move exactly a degree every day. It moves fastest in December, covering a little more than one degree of arc per day. Then, it gradually slows down all the way to June, when it is slowest, covering a little less than one degree of arc per day. Then it gradually speeds up again until it reaches its fastest pace in December. At the time Foster was born, the Sun was close to its highest speed, and so it advanced more than 28 degrees and 42 minutes in an equivalent number of days (and therefore an equivalent number of SA symbolic years). In other words, the SA directed position of Uranus would have been exactly at the natal MC in less than 28 years and 8 months. In fact, the exact conjunction would have happened around March, 1991.

Eyeballing SA directions of the outer planets to the angles is a great way to quickly establish the approximate time of important life milestones, the time when some kind of change is likely to make itself felt loud and clear. And it is also fairly easy to adjust for the variable

speed of the Sun. Just subtract a degree for every 30 years to the Sun's arc if the birth is around December, add the same if the birth is around, and apply proportional corrections to in-between birth. Another way around is to simply use a year's window around the estimated date of exact hit. So, in Jodie Foster's example, you could say that the exact hit happened when she was between 28 and 29 years of age. The vagaries of life will forgive us for not being metronomic!



The transits and SA directed hits of the outer planets are most significant when the natal target is the Sun, the Moon, or any of the angles. Also, a hit could be either a conjunction, an opposition, or a square in the case of transits, or any 8th harmonic aspect in the case of SA directed hits. 8th harmonic aspects are multiples of 45 degrees, which include conjunction, semi-square (45 degree aspect), square, sesqui-quadrant (135 degree aspect), and opposition. In this article, we will only look at the transiting and SA directed *conjunctions* of the outer planets to the *angles* of the chart. These are the easiest to spot and also often carry the most impact.

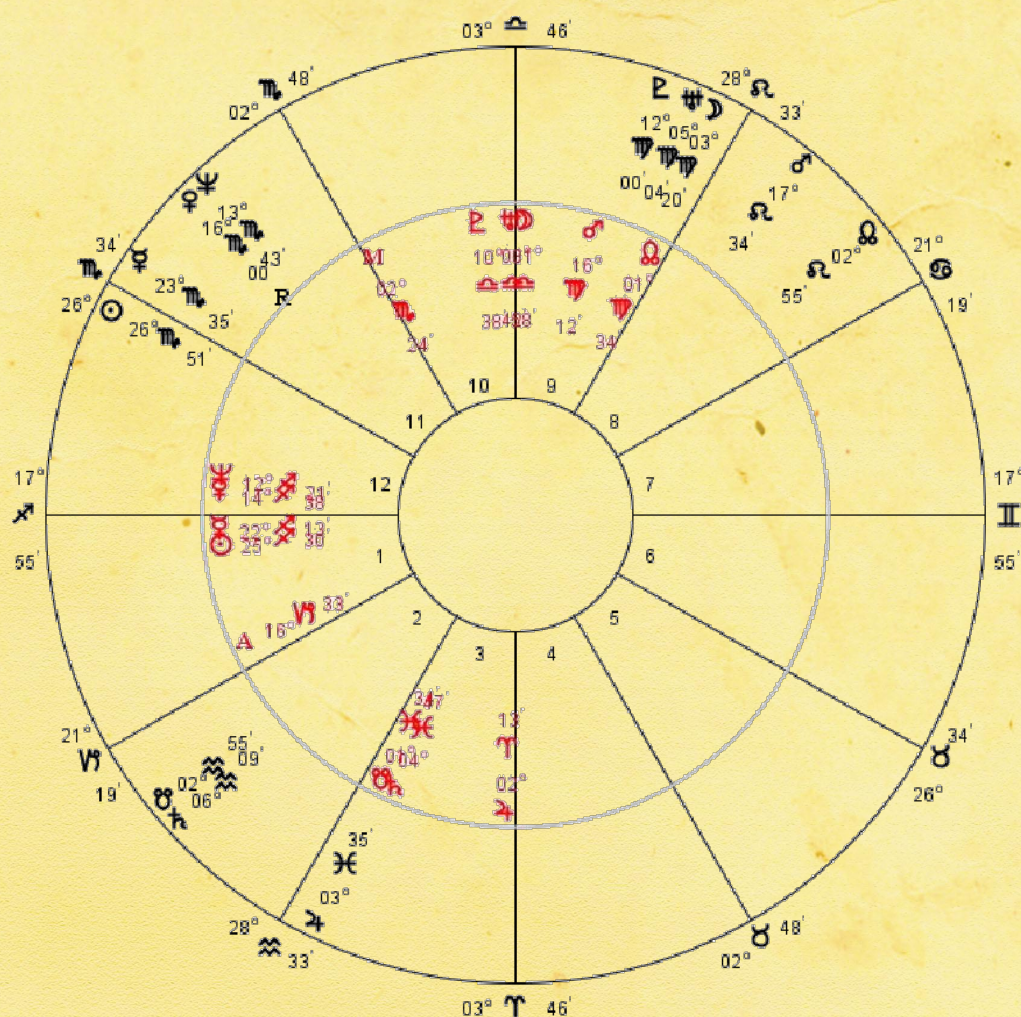
The ascendant stands for the body and personality, the descendant for the spouse and marriage, the MC for career and status (but a parent for a child), the IC for home and family (and a parent for a child).

What areas of life do the angles represent, so that when an outer planet comes knocking, we can tell *where* the impact is going to be felt? We can begin with a simple, generally

acceptable set of meanings: the ascendant stands for the body and personality, the descendant for the spouse and marriage, the MC for career and status (but a parent for a child), the IC for home and family (and a parent for a child). This is a good start, but as we shall see, events in life often demands a keener perspective and a deeper level of reasoning to understand their actual impact.

Let's return to Jodie Foster's chart. She has a strong natal Uranus because it is closely conjunct her Moon. Her career has followed a different Uranian arc: her roles have been different from the typical female parts, often disturbing, sometimes hair-raising. You can feel the electricity of the Uranian energy coursing strongly in movies like *The Accused*, *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Panic Room*, and *Flight Plan*. Every one of these movies continually throbs with an unsettling pulse. In *The Silence of the Lambs* Jodie Foster played perhaps her most memorable role, an FBI agent set out to catch a serial killer with the help of a psychopath who is a sometimes cannibal on the side.

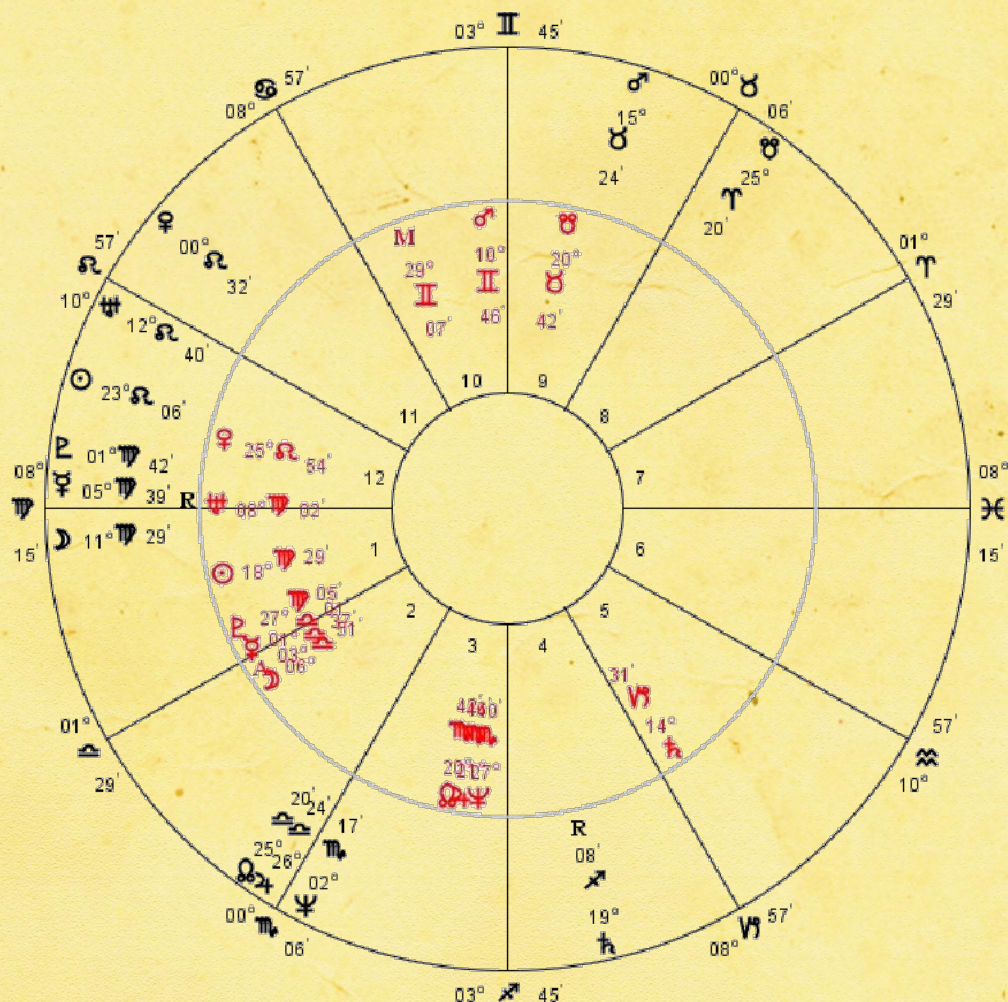
We saw earlier that SA directed Uranus conjuncted her natal MC in early 1991. What happened at that time? *The Silence of the Lambs* was released on Feb 14, 1991 in the USA. Here's Foster's SA directed chart for this day, overlaid on her natal chart:



We know what we are going to see, of course: the remarkable conjunction of SA Uranus at 03° Lib 42 to the natal MC at 03° Lib 46. If you had looked at this standout picture ahead of time, you would have expected a Uranian impact (unusual, perhaps disruptive, and perhaps

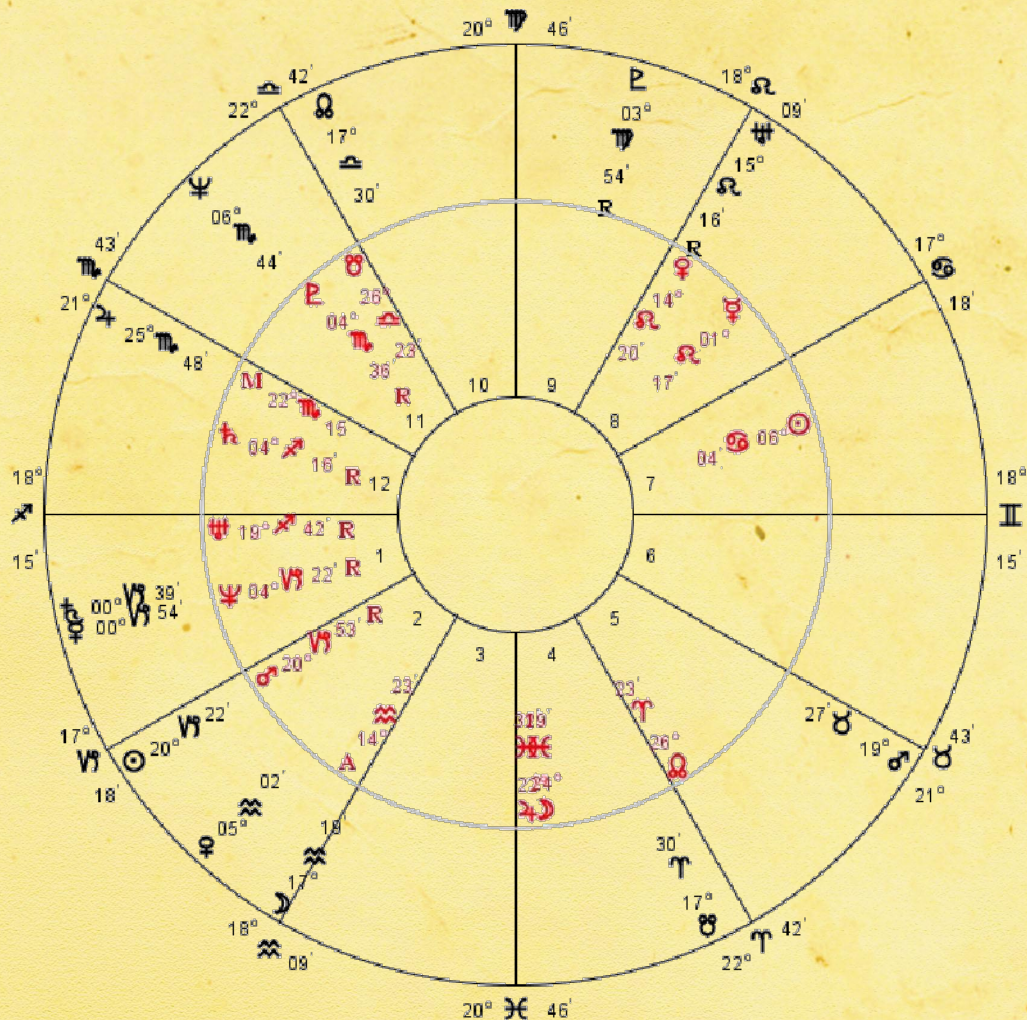
shocking) on her career, and through it, on her public status or image. This is exactly what happened with this role. The role accorded Foster standout status and visibility via the Uranian dimension. (She won a best actress Oscar for her performance, but that happened later and is not to be attributed to this Uranian hit.)

Like Jodie Foster, Madonna built her entire career around being bold and unorthodox. She thumbed her nose at the prevailing tradition, daring to be herself no matter what, brewing together a heady mix of sex, religion, and brash forwardness. Her concerts are famous for their shock value, drawing hordes of fans. Starting as a relatively unknown singer, she hit the big time when her album *Like a Virgin* was released in November 1984. Using a date of November 15 for the release, here is the SA directed chart overlaid on her natal chart.



Look at the flashy SA Uranus right over her ascendant. On hindsight, years after the release of the album, you might think that the SA Uranus should really have been on her MC. But analyzing on hindsight clouds the judgment and is often misleading. What you really want to do is to place yourself at a time, say, six months *before* the release of this album. Then, seeing the SA Uranus closing in on the ascendant you would predict a Uranian impact (unusual/disruptive/shocking) on her body and personality. This is where you would need to reason more keenly by relating the potential impact to her life circumstance. Here she is, young and impressionable, bursting with ambition, hoping to achieve something big. She saw herself putting her body, her personality, and her unique brand of appeal squarely behind this artistic creation. The ascendant involvement rings very true. Her vocal

Let us review the quick eyeballing technique to spot those crucial SA directed outer planet to angle conjunctions. In Madonna's chart, natal Uranus is at 12 Leo 40 and the ascendant is at 08 Vir 15. This is an arc distance of 25 degrees and 35 minutes from Uranus to the ascendant. If the Sun were to move exactly one degree per day, then this distance would be covered in SA time of 25 years and a little over 6 months. However, Madonna was born in August, at which time the Sun is just coming out of its slowest pace, which means it would take more time to cover the arc distance. Over 25 years, this extra time would amount to a little less than a year. (Using our previously outlined thumb rule correction factor of 1 degree for every 30 degrees, or 1 year for every 30 years.) So let's approximate the total to 25 years + 6 months + 10 months = 26 years and 4 months. Adding this to her birth date of August 16, 1958, would put the SA hit date at around December 1984!



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obviously dramatic in the absolute sense, but might be extremely significant relative to the person's circumstance. Here's the transit chart for a woman at the time of her marriage. (Birth data withheld to preserve anonymity.) Notice *transiting* Uranus on the natal ascendant.

Is marriage a deeply transformative experience? After all, most people get married; there is certainly nothing terribly unusual about it. If anything, it is most significant as a rite of passage. Often, the astrological measurement corroborates this because Saturn, a marker of time and obligations, is usually involved. So, when a marriage is marked by an outer planet activity, then you should expect a transformative quality to it that is beyond the usual uncertainty, anxiety, and expectation of the obvious life changes associated with it. In this case, with Uranus being the active planet, you can expect something more unusual or unconventional, perhaps more disruptive, perhaps even shocking (to the families?)

In another case, a woman who suffered a miscarriage when transiting Uranus was on the natal IC. It has had a deep and far-reaching effect—the grief has lasted well beyond the actual period around the miscarriage, because she has not had a baby since. All this feels much more Plutonic—death, transformation, permanence—than Uranian. The only explanation to the Uranian dimension is the unexpectedness it, coming out of the blue, shockingly upsetting all plans and expectations. Only much later was the miscarriage seen to be an irredeemable loss.

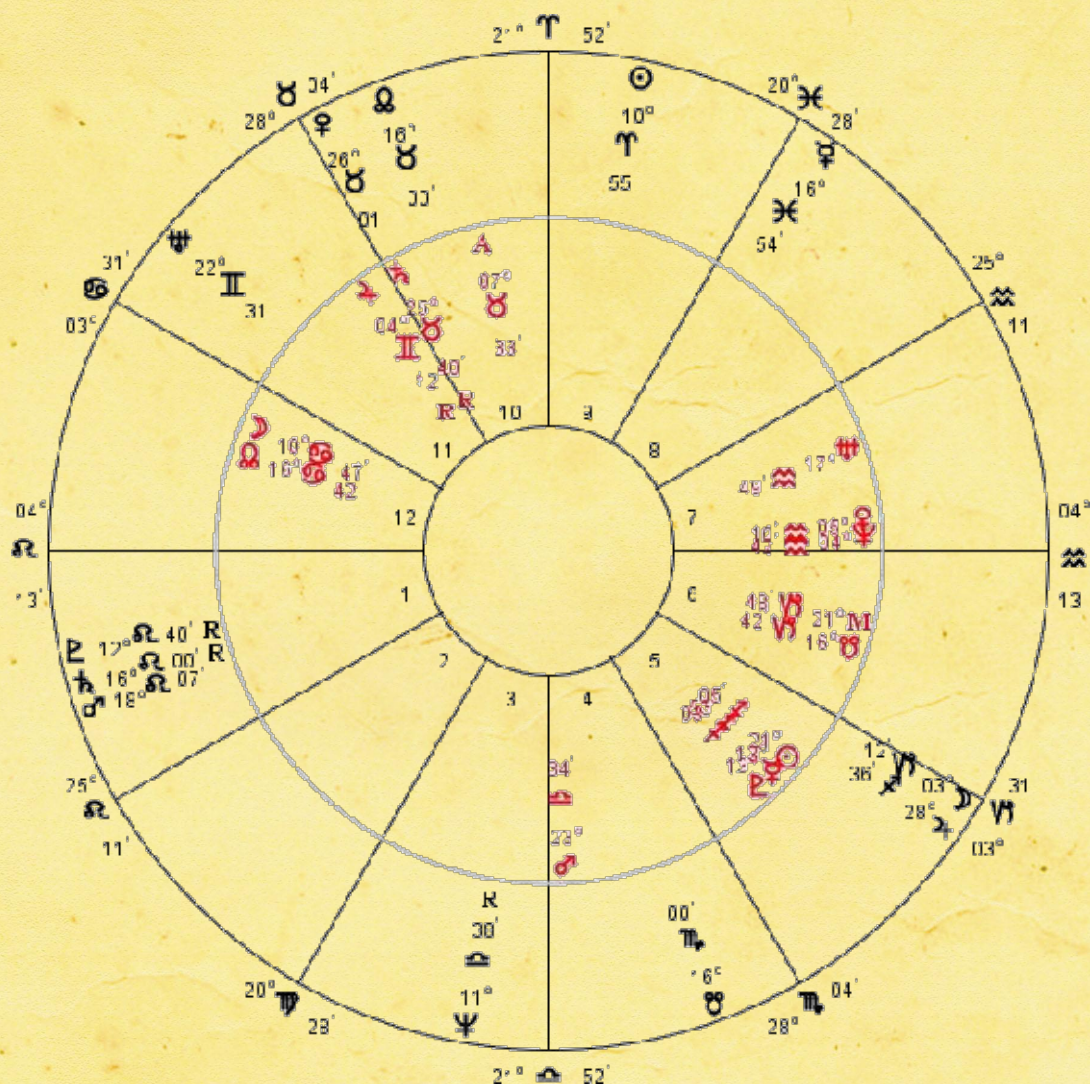
While Uranus arrives fast and snappy, crackling with high energy, Neptune rolls in gradually, and softly enfolds in an expansive and lingering embrace. Its transits and SA directions are often associated with loss, deception, and confusion. When the writer Stephen King was two years old, his father left home on an errand, and never returned. It was August 1949. Transiting Neptune was right around 12-13 degrees of Libra, hovering darkly over Stephen King's natal IC at 12 Lib 29. The classic Neptunian significations of disappearance and loss fully applied to a parent as signified by the IC.



Neptune also signifies other-worldliness, which, in a person who is not spiritually inclined, usually speaks of loss of ambition and retirement. In November-December 2000 as the U.S. Presidential election played out to its unbelievable conclusion, and Al Gore lost when the Supreme Court handed down its verdict on December 12, transiting Neptune at 04 Aqu 42, had just passed his natal descendant at 04 Aqu 13.

Soon after this, Gore retired from the public eye for quite a while as Neptune made its way through his 7th house. Remember that the 7th house is the 10th from the 10th house, and is therefore the alternative house of career. It is also the house that signifies the public life, which is of course especially important for politicians.

Many astrologers who joined the fun and games in predicting the winner would have seen this Neptunian hit and called for a loss, correctly. However, what of George W. Bush, who won that election? He *also* had Neptune within touching distance of his descendant. The only difference was that while Neptune had already passed over Gore's descendant and was coming back for a return hit, it had not yet passed over Bush's descendant, which is at 07 Aqu 07. Neptune brings confusion to the exercise of prediction as well!

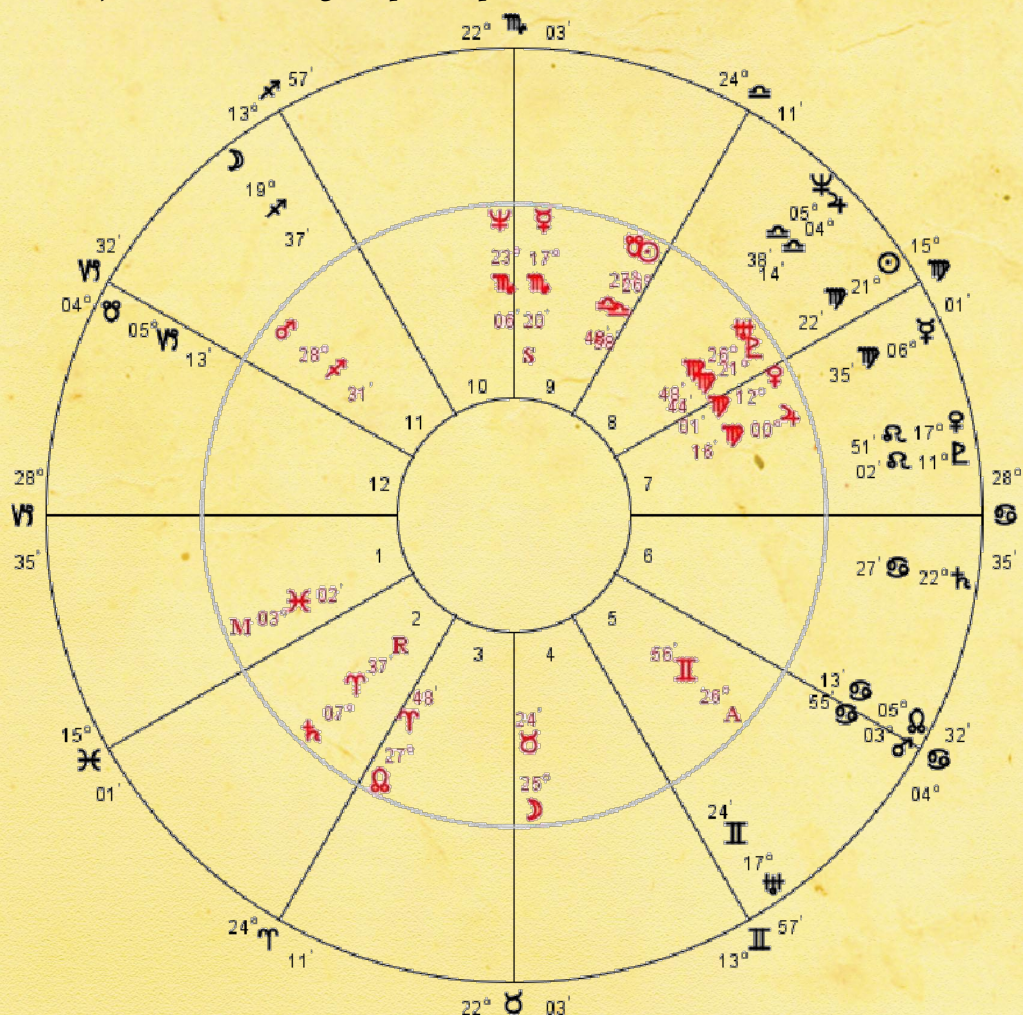


Here's one more example associating Neptune with retirement. On June 15, 2006, Microsoft announced that effective July 2008 Gates would make transition out of a day-to-day role in the company to spend more time on his global health and education work at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. On the day of this announcement, transiting Neptune, at around 19-20 Aquarius was right on top of Gates' MC at 20 Aqu 42.

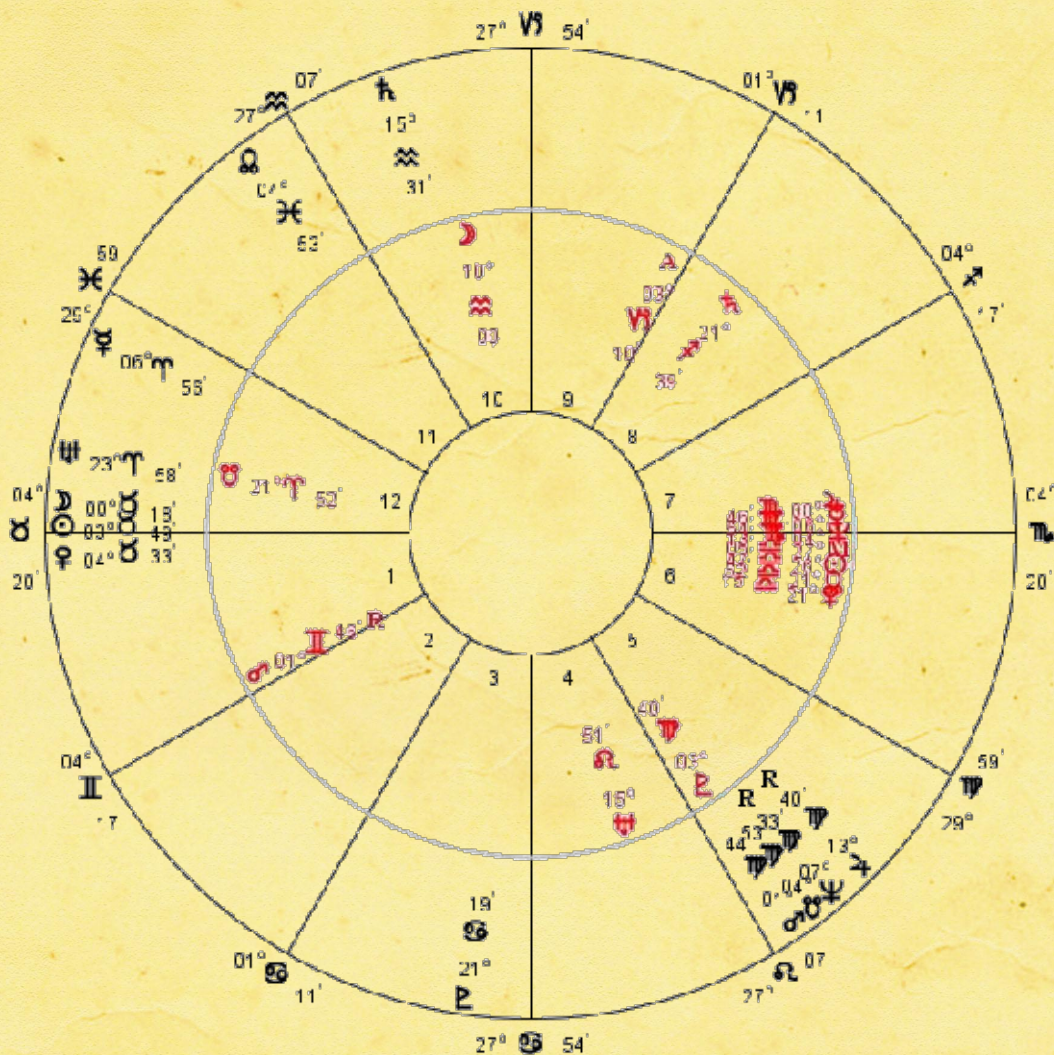
Imagination, the sea, illusion and magic are among other classic Neptune significations. To this, add film making and photography, both of which are processes that essentially work with illusion and metaphor. Jacques Cousteau lived a near archetypal Neptunian life around these significations, creating a whole new world of deep sea photography and filmmaking. In 1943, he invented the underwater breathing device called the aqualung. The aqualung made long underwater explorations possible for the first time, and has since been developed into the modern-day scuba-diving equipment. In this case, Neptune did not bring loss, in fact, just the opposite. If a person is in touch with Neptune in a healthy and constructive way, then Neptune transits and SA directions can bring success, revelation, and greater awareness. On another point, we may think here that because this is a professional milestone, wouldn't Neptune on the MC be more appropriate? However, Cousteau's life was one long saga of marine exploration and underwater moviemaking. Like Madonna, the line between the personal and professional was very thin; he simply lived for his work.

Another example in a similar vein. In 1996, SA Neptune came to conjunct Oprah Winfrey's IC. Here's what the Wikipedia says about this time period in her career: "In late 1996, Winfrey introduced a new segment on her television show: Oprah's Book Club... The book club became such a powerful force that whenever Winfrey introduced a new book as her book-club selection, it instantly became a best-seller (known as the Oprah Effect...Being recognized by Winfrey often means a million additional book sales for an author." When the book club first started, there was no way of knowing how important it would become to authors and publishers. With Neptune on the IC, it could be read as a highly imaginative (Neptune) act that was prompted from the depths of Oprah's being (IC). Her IC is in Sagittarius, highly suggestive of Oprah's opinionation seeding the powerful promotion of literature and awareness through the book club.

Now, on to a surprising twist regarding marriage. Traditionally, Saturn transits and SA directions to the descendant signify marriage. The reasoning is that the descendant is the marriage partner, and Saturn signifies contractual commitment, thus the legal institution of marriage. But experience has shown time and again that Neptune's transits or SA directed hits to the angles coincide with marriage. Let's first take a look at this example, of a woman who got married just as transiting Neptune passed over her natal MC:



The circumstance around this marriage (as it later turned out) was rife with deception, which is of course a particularly Neptunian quality. Here's another example, a woman whose marriage coincided with transiting Neptune conjuncting her natal descendant:



There are many planets crowding around the descendant but Neptune is the only outer planet in the group.

This woman had not really wanted to marry, but only did so at the time to please her parents. There is a sense of craving in to pressure, and a certain quality of helplessness and passivity. In yet another case I know of, a man who had for some time resisted the pressure from his parents to get married, gave a little ground, dithered for a year or two, and then finally threw in the towel. At the time of his marriage, transiting Neptune was right over his natal IC.

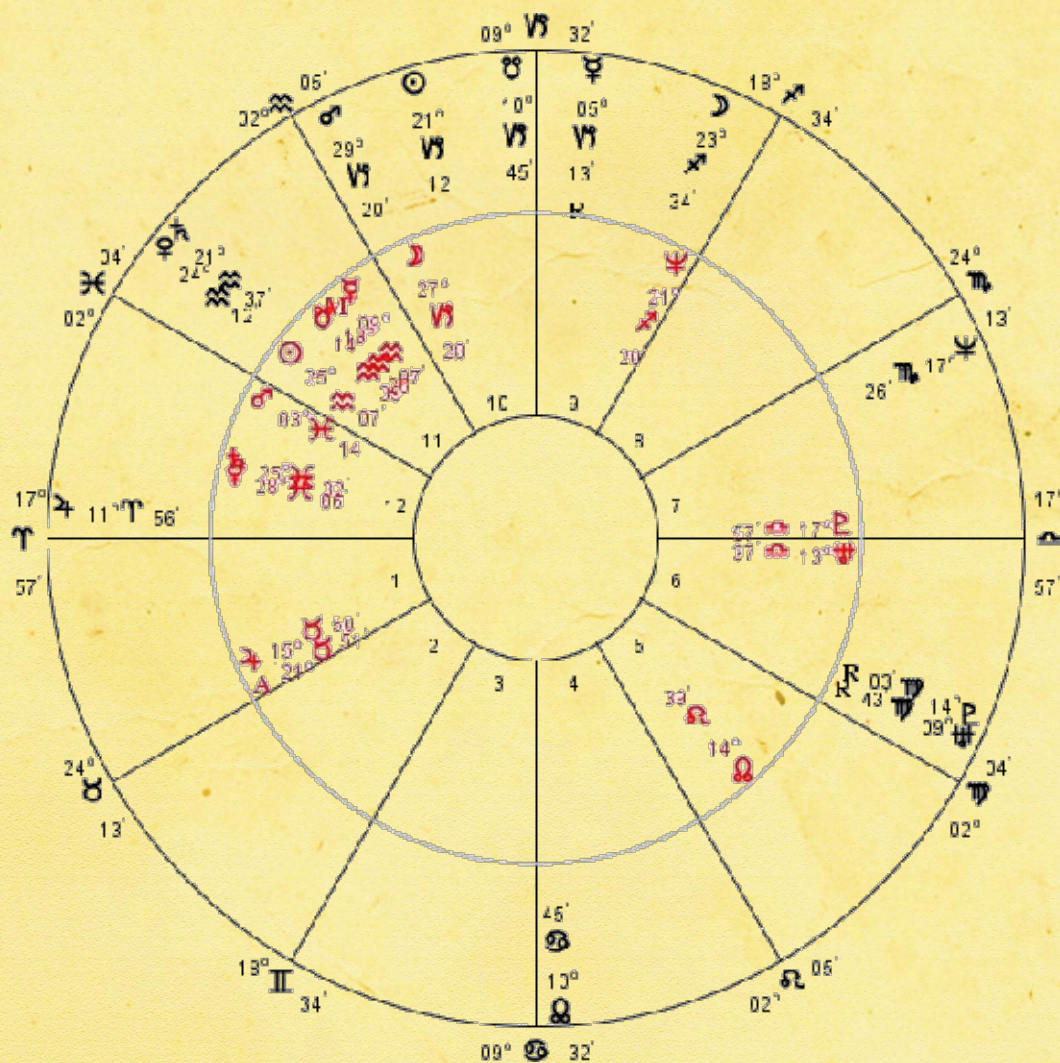
Many marriages in general carry with them a great sense of illusion. There are so many dreams and visions associated with marriage, especially for women, that it seems much more Neptunian than Saturnian.

Of all the outer planets, Pluto has the most ominous connotations. After all, it does signify death. However, the death may come to pass in different kinds of circumstances, which have a lot to do with what astrological activity is coincident. Not all death is Plutonian. If the death is accompanied by a great sense of loss, such as the death of a person well before their time, then there is a significant Neptunian quality. Or, the death may be sudden or shocking, such as an accident, in which case there is a strong Uranian quality. With Pluto,

the meaning of death is really that it is the ultimate transformation. In theory, the hits of moving Pluto, whether by transit or solar arc, over the natal angles are deeply and permanently transformative, and powerfully regenerating.

I have discovered by experience (my own life included) that moving Pluto hitting the natal IC leads to a deep questioning of one's life: what is happening to me, why am I all alone, why do I feel like I am dying?

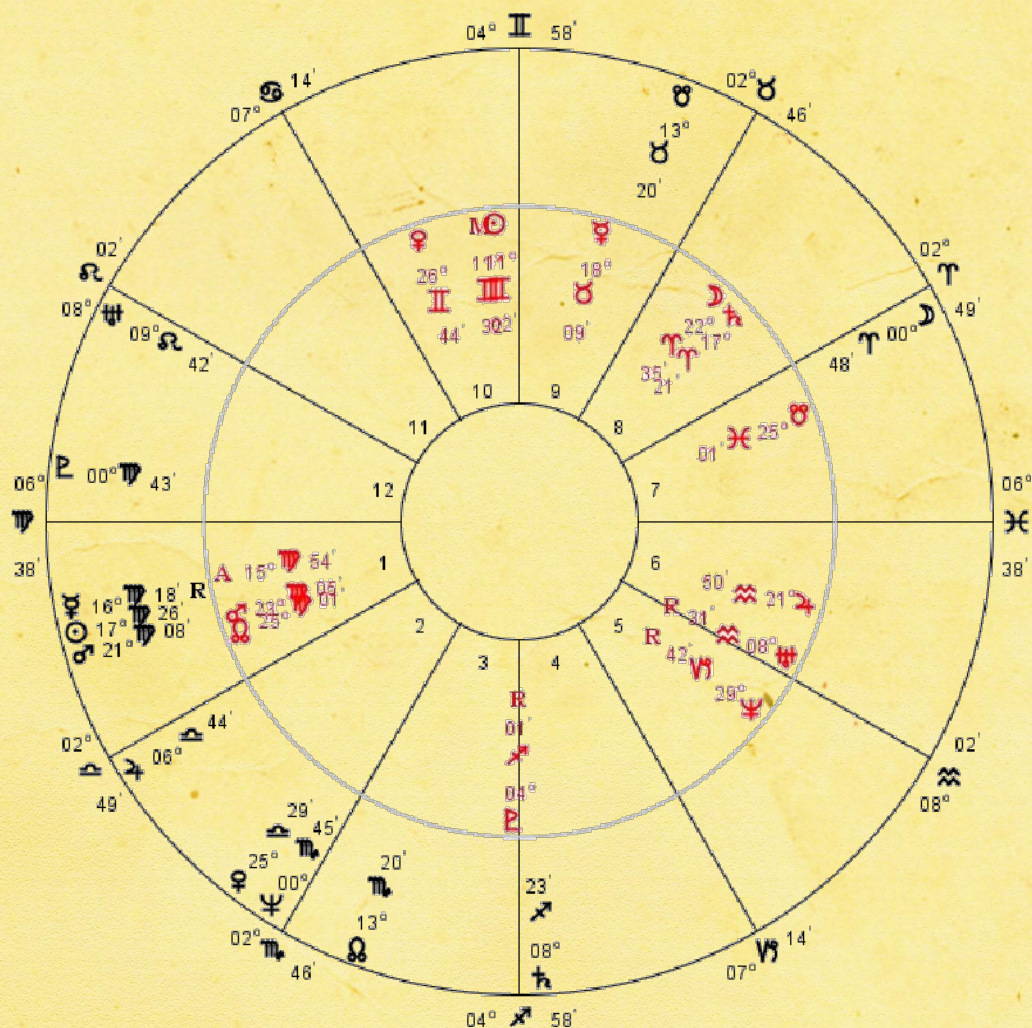
Here is the example of a woman who was married at the age of 25, and had a son. But she gradually grew apart from her husband, and finally separated in June 1997. Here's the SA directed chart for this time, overlaid on the natal chart.



You can see that SA Pluto is exactly on the natal descendant, a classic signification of the marriage partner. Pluto brings death, but what has died here is not a person, but the marriage between two people. The death is merely a punctuation in the regeneration, but of what? This woman's idea of relationship and marriage underwent a sustained regeneration, and with every passing day she grew a little stronger in being able to raise her son all by herself, and in seeing marriage as an unnecessary burden in her life.

This is another woman, whose mother suffered a heart attack in June 1997. (It's a remarkable coincidence that the time period here is the same as in the previous example, but be assured these are different women!) Her father had been dead for some years, and she was very close to her mother. Being an only child, she was alone in taking care of all her mother's needs. At the same time as her mother's heart attack, she herself was struggling with weight loss. And, as if this wasn't enough, she had to have surgery for another complication. Drawing the transit chart for June 1, 1997, and overlaying it on her natal horoscope, here's what we see:

The IC is the foundation of life, and Pluto was trying to knock it down, driving her into a frightening death experience.



We find Pluto, ominously hovering right there at the bottom of the chart, drawing a bead on the IC. This was an extremely harrowing period in this woman's life, with great emotional and physical pain. Her health, her emotional anchor, her psychological bearings were all on the verge of a total collapse. The IC is the foundation of life, and Pluto was trying to knock it down, driving her into a frightening death experience.

I have discovered by experience (my own life included) that moving Pluto hitting the natal IC leads to a deep questioning of one's life: what is happening to me, why am I all alone, why do I feel like I am dying? Coming out of this period feels like you have been granted a

new lease on life. This does not necessarily mean an outward restructuring of the life, like chucking your career and family and moving to a remote village, but it does lead to a deeper understanding that we are always at the mercy of larger forces that can dramatically remake our life.

These larger forces act with equal impunity on everyone, ordinary or famous. In mid-2004, Steve Jobs announced that he had been diagnosed with a malignant tumor in his pancreas. Quoting Wikipedia: "The prognosis for pancreatic cancer is usually very grim. Jobs, however, stated that he had a rare, far less aggressive type known as islet cell neuroendocrine tumor. After initially resisting the idea of conventional medical intervention and embarking on a special diet to thwart the disease, July 31, 2004, Jobs underwent surgery that successfully removed the tumor; he did not apparently require nor receive chemotherapy or radiation therapy." At this time, transiting Pluto at around 21 Sag was drop dead on his natal IC at 21 Sag 18. Here again there is surgery in the picture, and an adjustment of the diet echoing the weight loss issue in the previous case. This repetitive theme raises an interesting question: does moving Pluto coming to the IC tend to bring with it physiological/bodily changes, both in the external form, and in the internal hormonal/chemical balance?

A Pluto transit or SA directed hit to a natal angle does not necessarily have to coincide with a setback in life. Take the example of the well-known author and spiritualist Deepak Chopra. In the period 2004-2005, transiting Pluto made multiples passes over his natal MC. His career, which was already flourishing greatly, broadened its reach even further. In 2004, he was recruited to co-write a script for a proposed movie on the life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. This was a major career departure for him, branching out into the movies. This was also the year in which his book, "The Book of Secrets: Unlocking the Hidden Dimensions of Your Life," was published. This is one of the best and well-regarded books he has written, with many new insights into life and spirituality. As with Jacques Cousteau and Neptune, Chopra's career constantly examines life and death as two sides of the same coin, with obvious Pluto significations due to the in-depth exploration of this duality. So, Pluto's hit to the MC came about as he was reinforcing and amplifying this theme.

Studying the lives of celebrities and people we know makes us aware of how the outer planets may affect *our* lives when they arrive at our doorstep, by transits or solar arc directions to our horoscope. With the outer planets there is always a strong agenda to remake our lives in some way. Unlike the other planets whose energies we are more conscious of, and therefore have more control over, the outer planets are harder to deal with because their energies are not consciously integrated in our lives. The reason is that there is little outlet for normal expression of their energies by current social standards. Uranians are seen as too different, Neptunians are seen as too flighty and Plutonians are seen as too dark and intense. So most people with strong outer planet emphasis suppress this side of their personalities, or reject it altogether, or channel it in very narrow constructive activities if they are lucky enough to pull it together.

The best way to prepare for the transits and solar arc direction hits of the outer planets to the angles is to be very flexible. The more rigid we are, the harder it is to deal with the consequences of these hits. It is very important to be willing to let go of all pre-conceived notions of what we think our lives should be like, our material long-term goals, and even our emotional engagement with those who are closest to us. The best way to prepare for and live

through outer planet periods is to take it a day at a time and be open to anything and everything. Then, we have a genuine chance to experience life at its fullest, and raise our consciousness sufficiently that we are remade in a most spiritual way. Then, we can truly connect with all of life, within ourselves and without.

Birth Data

(In all the time zones, daylight savings has already been factored in. For example, in Stephen King's data, the birth place time zone is actually 5:00 hours west of GMT, but with daylight savings, it has been adjusted to 4:00 hours west.)

Jodie Foster: 1962-11-19, 08:14. Los Angeles, CA, USA. 118W15, 34N04, 08:00W

Madonna: 1958-08-16, 07:05. Bay City, MI, USA. 83W53, 43N36, 05:00W

Stephen King: 1947-09-21, 01:30. Portland, ME, USA. 70W16, 43N39, 04:00W

Al Gore: 1948-03-31, 12:53. Washington D.C., USA. 77W02, 38N54, 05:00W

George W. Bush: 1946-07-06, 07:26. New Haven, CT, USA. 72W55, 41N18, 04:00W

Bill Gates: 1955-10-28, 20:15. Seattle, WA, USA. 122W20, 47N36, 07:00W

Jacques Cousteau: 1910-06-11, 13:06. Ste Andre De Du, France. 00W27, 44N59, 00:00W

Deepak Chopra: 1946-10-22, 15:45. Delhi, India. 77E18, 28N40, 05:30E

Oprah Winfrey: 1954-01-29, 19:50. Koscuisko, MO, USA. 89W35, 33N03, 06:00W

Steve Jobs: 1955-02-24, 19:15. San Francisco, CA, USA. 122W25, 37N46, 08:00W

Arabic Astronomy

Centres of learning in medicine and astronomy/astrology were set up in Baghdad and Damascus, and the Caliph Al-Mansur of Baghdad established a major observatory and library in the city, making it the world's astronomical centre. During this time knowledge of astronomy was greatly increased, and the astrolab was invented by Al Fazari. So much was knowledge increased by the Arabs that even today a great many star names are Arabic in origin. Here is a short list for some of the most prominent, with their original meaning:

Star name	Meaning
Achernar	"River's End"
Aladfar	"Claws"
Aldebaran	"The Follower"
Alioth	"Sheep's Tail"
Altair	"The Flying"
Betelgeuse	"Central Hand"
Deneb	"Tail"
Mizar	"Waistband"
Rasolgethi	"Head of the Kneeling One"
Rigel	"Foot of the Great One"
Vega	"The Falling"

The meaning of the star names cannot really be understood without reference to the constellation of which they are a part. Some astrologers still include a few of the stars in their charts today, along with the usual planets. For example, Aldabaran is said to signify confidence, energy and leadership qualities, while Vega is said to indicate good fortune in worldly ambitions.